Twitter Thread by Ramki



Ramki
@ramkid

This isn't a story set in the year everyone loves to hate. In fact, that was a pretty good year for Rahul. It suited him well. He was anyway an expert at staying indoors and shunning human company. +

He liked nothing more than to make two packets of Maggi using three sachets of tastemaker, a cup of tea brewed for precisely 150 seconds, and then settle down on his chair that was specifically chosen because it could rest the plate and cup on its broad arms. And a book too. +

He'd sit there and think thoughts like 'Even my name is so lame. It's the default option every copywriter uses while writing an ad about a young executive. Don't they know most Rahuls are in their fifties now?' +

Anyway, what I am about to narrate happened a year before the big bad one. On the day that the world has arbitrarily decided to burden with great import. New Year's Eve. A day that really meant nothing to Rahul. But late that evening basic arithmetic caught up with him. +

He had run out of tastemaker. There were six packets of noodles on his shelf, their throats slit, robbed of their magical sachets with the mysterious powers. Sealed with rubber bands, the packets stared back blandly at Rahul. +

He needed that Maggi fix. His book was at a great juncture. He had a fresh supply of orange pekoe. The arms of his chair waited in anticipation. So, late that New Year's Eve, he stepped out. Not realising his life would change forever. +

That very evening, Rosy was walking aimlessly down the streets. Her long legs taking one desultory step after the other. She had a fringe that tumbled down her pretty forehead, and bounced with every step she took. +

Knots of young men were being annoyingly boisterous. Laughing louder than the jokes deserved. Back slapping and punching each other, as men do. Like Rahul, Rosy hated her name too. It was an open invitation for heckling, taunting, teasing. +

And her neighbourhood was infested with hecklers, taunters, and teasers. 'Hey Rosy, ek nazar idhar bhi!' 'What Rosy? All alone today? Where's that stud you were canoodling with yesterday?'. Then there was the whistling. She detested that more than anything else. +

She knew it wasn't a good idea to be out alone. Drunk drivers, high spirited men with low inhibitions, loud music that demanded loud behaviour. But she had been in an ugly spat, and had walked out in a rage. Under her fringe, hid a vicious scratch that was still pounding. +

Meanwhile Rahul went from shop to de-maggified shop searching for his fix. Why had it disappeared from the shelves so suddenly? Unknown to him, had it become an ingredient of new year roistering? The more he was turned down, the more he craved it. +

He too saw the noisy revellers. They had no interest in him. He was literally the walking definition of boring to them. He had walked a long way from home and was getting tired. He wanted to be back in his cave. The merrymakers seemed to be celebrating his predicament. +

Rosy needed to sit down to stop the pummeling in her head. She had reached the promenade. People were all over it like an oil spill in the sea. She spotted a single bench tucked out of view. An oasis of calm missed by the marauding hordes. She quickened her pace to get there. +

Once there, she curled her legs up beneath her, and hugged herself tightly to keep warm, as a cool breeze began to blow. That was exactly when Rahul saw the secluded bench too. And thought he'd rest his aching feet a bit before the long trudge home. +

It was only when he reached the bench he realised there was someone there. Huddled. Coiled. Ignoring the world around her. After a second's hesitation, he overcame his instinct to shun company. There was something serene about the moment. He sat down. And felt at peace. +

They sat together quietly for several minutes. On that quiet New Year Eve, both of them waited patiently for the other to make the first move. Rahul finally reached out and, very gently ruffled the curls on Rosy's forehead.+

Rosy looked up at Rahul with her limpid eyes and wagged her tail. When he finally got up to get back, she followed him all the way home... And that was how the year everyone loves to hate was a pretty good one for both Rahul and Rosy.

ANTHE.